



County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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Sachi Hamai
Interim Chief Executive Officer

February 9, 2015

To: Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, Mayor
Supervisor Hilda L. Solis
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Sheila Kuehl
Supervisor Don Knabe

From: Sachi A. Hamai
Interim Chief Executive Officer

Board of Supervisors
HILDA L. SOLIS
First District

MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS
Second District

SHEILA KUEHL
Third District

DON KNABE
Fourth District

MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH
Fifth District

COUNTY FILM AND STILL PHOTOGRAPHY STATUS REPORT

On September 9, 2014, on motion of Supervisor Knabe, the Board instructed this Office to report back every 60 days on the actions taken to standardize the County's film and still photography permit service fees and attract more productions to film in the County. On December 2, 2014, this Office provided your Board with a status report as requested, and this memorandum provides an update on the actions taken during the past two months per the Board's instructions.

City of Los Angeles City Council Recommendations to Increase Filming

As indicated in the December 2, 2014 status report to your Board, this Office met with the City of Los Angeles and FilmLA this past October to discuss filming challenges in Los Angeles. Per a suggestion from that meeting, this Office conducted a review of 19 recommendations approved by the City of Los Angeles in 2009 to increase film production. The purpose of this review was to determine applicability and feasibility of these recommendations for County implementation (Attachment). The following is a summary of findings:

- Seven recommendations were found to be either implemented or underway in the County. These include establishing parking coordination among jurisdictions, designating elected officials' staff as film contacts, identifying departmental film contacts, preparing ordinance on legally enforcing film shoots, contracting with FilmLA to serve as ambassador to the filming industry, establishing processes to solve filming location issues, and creating a website with a comprehensive list of County properties available for filming.

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- Two recommendations were found to be applicable and feasible for County implementation. These include: 1) working with film industry location managers to create a “10 hardest to film in” location list and work on solutions to identified problems, and 2) developing a strategic plan to keep film production in Los Angeles. This Office will work with FilmLA, the film industry, and our regional partners to implement the aforementioned recommendations.
- Five recommendations were found not to be applicable or feasible for County implementation. These include creating power utility nodes, providing free parking under power lines, allowing FilmLA to manage vacant properties, reporting on city film policies, and compiling a comprehensive list of vacant city properties.
- Five recommendations were fiscal incentives that revolved around business tax credits/incentives, sales tax refunds, and a free parking program. These recommendations will require additional review and analysis with assistance from various County departments.

Unless otherwise directed, this Office will continue to further review the feasibility of implementing the recommendations with fiscal incentives and move ahead on implementing recommendations found to be applicable and feasible. A status on these recommendations will be provided in the next update.

Filming Fee Waiver

On December 2, 2014, the City of Los Angeles approved an extension of a five-year fee waiver for film productions shot on city properties aimed at combating runaway productions. The City usually charges a use fee to film on City-owned locations such as City Hall, parks, libraries, airports, and police facilities. The fee waivers are estimated to have cost the city approximately \$1.75 million in lost revenue over the past five years, averaging \$350,000 a year. The fee waiver does not apply to certain properties such as the Convention Center, Olvera Street, and Los Angeles Zoo.

The County also charges a use fee to film on County-owned locations such as the Hall of Administration, parks, libraries, beaches, and flood control channels. County properties excluded from this pricing are Arboreta and Botanical Gardens, Museum of Art, Natural History Museum, Page Museum, Ford Theatre, La Plaza, Music Center, Disney Hall, Grand Park, and Hollywood Bowl. Based on film use fees collected by the County during fiscal year 2013-14, a similar filming fee waiver (excluding properties identified above) would have cost the County approximately \$676,000 in lost revenue. Extrapolating this amount over five years would equal to \$3,380,000.

This Office will continue to monitor the City's fee waiver, look further into the cost and benefits of implementing a similar fee waiver in the County, and work with the Board's filming deputies on determining next steps.

Coordination of Small Group Meeting of Film Industry Leaders

This Office continues to work with FilmLA and the City of Los Angeles to schedule a series of small group meetings with film industry leaders beginning in February to discuss opportunities and partnerships for keeping and promoting film, television, commercial, and photography production in the County.

County/Film Industry Coordination Meeting

On January 14, 2015, this Office coordinated the semi-annual meeting between film industry representatives and affected County departments to discuss various filming-related issues. Two topics of interest included:

- “Drones” for commercial filming. Recently, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) provided exemptions to several private companies to use drones for filming and other commercial purposes under strict guidelines. Drone use for filming under County jurisdiction is allowed; however, it must be identified in their filming permit and reviewed by the Fire Department. No incidences or problems with drone use were identified thus far.
- Grand Park fees. Film Industry representatives are concerned that filming fees are still too high and a deterrent to keeping filming productions in Los Angeles. Grand Park representative provided a detailed report of filming and still photography activity and inquiries over the past year, and reported that filming activity has increased over the past year.

This Office will continue to coordinate semi-annual meetings to address any issues, and seek a proper balance between ensuring efficient and responsive services to the film industry while protecting the County’s interest. The next coordination meeting is scheduled for July 15, 2015.

As requested by the Board, this Office will report back in 60 days with updates on actions taken to standardize the County’s film and still photography permit service fees and attract more productions to film in the County.

Please let me know if you have any questions, or your staff may contact Jerry Ramirez at (213) 974-4282, or jramirez@ceo.lacounty.gov.

SAH:JJ:SK
JR:ib

Attachment

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
County Counsel

Applicability/Feasibility of City of Los Angeles Filming Recommendations for County Implementation

City Recommendations Approved on 10/7/2009	Comments
1. DIRECT the Business Tax Advisory Committee (BTAC) to evaluate a business tax credit for building owners that allow the exteriors to be filmed for free.	Fiscal Incentive. Additional review and analysis required.
2. DIRECT the BTAC to evaluate a business tax credit for building owners that allow interior filming for a "reasonable rate."	Fiscal Incentive. Additional review and analysis required.
3. INSTRUCT the Office of Finance to report to the Jobs and Business Development Committee in 30 days on the feasibility and fiscal impact of a sales tax refund for purchases made for filming within the City when at least 75 percent of the shooting is done in the City of Los Angeles.	Fiscal Incentive. Additional review and analysis required.
4. DIRECT the Department of General Services (GSD) and Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) implement a free parking program, except for the cost of providing security, in all available City parking lots after business hours and during weekends and further DIRECT the GSD and LADOT to report in 30 days to the Jobs and Business Development Committee, with the assistance of the Chief Legislative Analyst (CLA), in regard to said free parking program.	Fiscal Incentive. Additional review and analysis required.
5. DIRECT the BTAC to evaluate a proposal to provide business tax incentives to private parking companies which provide parking to film shoots as a "reasonable rate."	Fiscal Incentive. Additional review and analysis required.
6. REQUEST the Council President and Chair, Jobs and Business Development Committee, to send a letter to the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) requesting that the LADWP create three power utility nodes as part of a pilot project in Downtown Los Angeles that film production companies can use in lieu of generators.	Not applicable/feasible to County. Not recommended for further consideration.
7. REQUEST the LADWP to provide free parking/base camp use for up to one week under LADWP power lines and further REQUEST the LADWP to report back to the Jobs and Business Development Committee with a map of locations.	Not applicable/feasible to County. Not recommended for further consideration.
8. DIRECT the Film Industry Parking Task Force to report back to the Jobs and Business Development Committee in regard to partnering with other government entities to find additional parking opportunities.	Implemented/underway
9. REQUEST the Council President and the Chair, Jobs and Business Development Committee, to send a letter to all Council members asking for them to designate one staff person per office that is the film contact.	Implemented/underway
10. DIRECT the City Administrative Officer (CAO) and CLA to collect, distribute, and place on the City website a list of each of the City Department contacts regarding filming.	Implemented/underway
11. DIRECT the CAO and CLA to work with film industry location managers to create a "10 hardest to film in" location list and further DIRECT the CAO and CLA to report back to the Jobs and Business Development Committee in 30 days with solutions to identified problems.	Recommended for further consideration.
12. DIRECT the CAO and CLA to work with FilmLA to develop a process whereby FilmLA can manage vacant City property.	Not applicable/feasible to County. Not recommended for further consideration

13. DIRECT and REQUEST the CAO, CLA and City Attorney, as appropriate, to prepare and present an ordinance whereby the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) can legally enforce properly permitted film shoots to include making it illegal to disrupt a properly permitted film shoot.	Implemented/underway
14. DIRECT the CAO, with assistance of the CLA and City Attorney, to review the draft contract for FilmLA and to look for opportunities to increase FilmLA's role in marketing the film industry to City residents and to act as an ambassador between the City and film industry.	Implemented/underway
15. DIRECT the Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP) to report back to the Jobs and Business Development Committee within 3 days on its film policy and with said report to include cost and availability of its locations; the film coordinator for each location; and the discrepancies found between locations.	Not applicable/feasible to County. Not recommended for further consideration.
16. DIRECT the (RAP) to report back to the jobs and Business Development Committee within 30 days with recommendations on how to make it easier to film in RAP locations.	Implemented/underway
17. DIRECT FilmLA, which is currently creating a comprehensive location website, to include on that website a list of City properties, City incentives, contact information, parking and base camp locations and costs and further DIRECT that said website should highlight locations outside of the Downtown area in areas where there is less filming.	Implemented/underway
18. DIRECT the GSD to report back to the Jobs and Business Development Committee with a comprehensive list of vacant City properties that will update the list that was prepared in 1996.	Not applicable/feasible to County. Not recommended for further consideration.
19. DIRECT the City of Los Angeles work with the Los Angeles delegation of State Senators and Assembly members to create a strategic plan to keep film production in Los Angeles.	Recommended for further consideration.